

MALAWI - TWIN

The Parish of Corpus Christi, Tonbridge, Twinned with Malawi

- Drought in Malawi -

Dear Parishioner

October 2005

This is a special appeal to ask you to give help to our three linked Parishes in Malawi who are suffering terribly from lack of food and water, because of the drought.

Malawi is particularly affected because, having no way of earning a national income from exports, the people depend entirely for their food on what each can grow for themselves. This has been the worst drought for ten years and many, especially the very young, the old and housebound, are dying from malnutrition.

You may recall the news from *Nsanje* in our recent newsletter, which alerted us to this terrible situation and we have now received messages from Fr Denis who assists at his local Parish of *Kachebere* and Fr Alfred from *Chiringa*. Here are extracts from their letters:

Father Denis writes - *"Malawi is undergoing the worst kind of hunger for a decade. Normally by this time of the year farmers would still have food from their harvest. Unfortunately this is not the case this year. Many people are sleeping on empty stomachs. They have no choice and there are no alternatives. The worst hit are the babies. The children's wards in the hospitals are full because of the increased cases of malnutrition. The number of adult deaths has also increased. The president has declared this a disaster country and is appealing for donors and western countries to come in. We hope the help will come soon because if it doesn't we will lose many people. Moreover, the food aid may not be able to reach the poorest of the poor who live away from the main roads, if help comes at a time when it is raining. Please pray for Malawi."*

Father Alfred writes: - *"When I returned to Malawi I found the situation pathetic. People are starving and 90% of children are undernourished. Every morning when I come out of the Parish house I always find a lot of people waiting for me simply begging for a meal for the day. It is heartbreaking when I turn away all these people and tell them that I have no resources to assist them. When I go into the villages the situation is even worse to see a lot of chronically sick persons without food and the very basic necessities of life. The whole country is hit by hunger but Chiringa is worse off because of it's already poverty stricken status. This has made it worse off than other areas in the country. It is very challenging for me to preach the word of God in these circumstances. I am asking you to keep me in your prayers. I would appreciate if you could mobilise resources for food assistance through your parish and from all people of good will so that I can assist people coming to my doorstep for assistance. I rely on you and I know you will succeed with the help of God."*

Dear Parishioner, the previous page says it all. These priests are not strangers in a far off land. Fr Denis ministered to us during the month of August and Father Alfred attended our recent parish picnic. They are real people whom we know.

Fr Denis says Mass regularly at his local parish of *Kachebere*, and his students visit the sick and housebound as part of their priestly training, so he and they, see the plight of the parish families.

Fr Alfred now has the added care of the sixty or so young children who attend the daily pre-school playgroup with which we are heavily involved.

We have sponsored children in both parishes.

Our Twinning project has put us at the sharp end of contact with Africa and we are getting the news, not from reporters in the national newspapers, or television, but from the very people who are witnessing famine, malnutrition and death at first hand.

This week we have sent £2,000, almost every penny we have in the Malawi fund and more will follow with your help.

Please remember that the money we send goes directly into their parish bank accounts to help the priests buy grain and suchlike to give to the most desperate people.

Please help, not only with your prayers, which are so important at this time, but also with a gift.

Please put what you can in an envelope marked 'Malawi Appeal'. And give it to Fr Michael, or any of the Malawi Team. Cheques should be made out to 'Corpus Christi Church' and will attract Gift Aid if you are a tax payer.

May Almighty God bless you for the love you have shown and continue to show to these, our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

Peter Wells
Co-ordinator, Malawi-Twin

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